



## Notes from LEAD Editor

*Employees are undoubtedly the most important and valuable resource in the workplace. Therefore it is critical that the organization creates a climate that encourages employee input, ideas, and contributions. This month in **LEAD** we have provided tips on ways to value the workforce and encourage employee participation. We invite you to use and share the ideas you find in **LEAD**.*

### LEAD Article

## DEVELOPING A +POSITIVE+ CULTURE

**Employees want recognition, praise, and managers who will listen to them and encourage their participation. Remember the ideas below as you interact with employees:**

- **Make your praise personal.** Meet with employees one-on-one and thank them for doing a good job. Do it verbally or put it in writing – or do both. Be sincere when you praise others, and do it as often as it is warranted.
- **Make time to listen to employees.** Today's hectic schedules don't leave a lot of time to meet with and listen to employees. But, it is essential to make these meetings a priority. You should never tell an employee you're too busy to listen to them.
- **Offer specific feedback** – on an employee's performance; on the department; on the company; on the industry; on future prospects. The more feedback you can offer employees, the more motivated they will be to do a good job.
- **Create an open work environment.** You want to create a culture where coming up with new ideas and taking initiative is the norm, not the exception. If managers and supervisors are open and trusting, the culture will be as well.
- **Tie employees to the organization.** Inform everybody about upcoming projects and company strategies; show the link between individual performances and the organization's success.
- **Involve employees in decisions** – especially when those decisions will have a direct effect on them.
- **Give employees ownership.** Give them personal stake in their work, the work environment, the company, and the company's products and services. The more ownership they take, the more motivated they will be.
- **Help employees learn.** The ability to acquire new skills is very important to today's workers. Ask employees what their learning goals are, and help them tie their personal goals to the goals of the organization.
- **Celebrate every success.** Whenever there is a victory of any kind – for the company, the department, any individual – take the time to properly acknowledge that success.

-Adapted from *The Motivational Manager*, (800) 878-5331, [www.ragan.com](http://www.ragan.com)

## ENTRUSTING EMPLOYEES

**Employee performance, motivation, and success all depend on your ability to value employees. To build stronger relationships with and value employees, remember the following 5 ideas:**

### Entrust Responsibility

By wisely assigning responsibility to all employees, you'll be able to create a work environment that fosters employee contributions, teamwork, and growth. Learn to spread the work around to help the entire staff develop.

### Assign Tasks

Get everyone in the organization involved, even if it's in small ways at first. When you entrust even simple tasks, you draw members into action on behalf of the organization. The more employees become involved, the more meaningful their commitment will be, which will all result in a more successful organization.

### Treat Members Equally

Everyone enjoys being "in the know." People want to have influence and be included in the decision-making process within the organization. Show that you value every person in your organization by allowing them to contribute – it'll translate into motivated employees.

### Use Praise

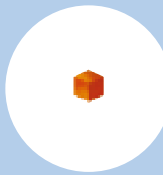
Learning to praise employees effectively improves the culture in the workplace and helps employees feel appreciated. Remember to praise employees as often as possible.

### Generate Enthusiasm

There's no substitute for genuine enthusiasm. Real enthusiasm generates real energy, which can become an irresistible force if you focus it properly. Interact with members in a positive, energetic manner. Believe in the organization, show zest and have confidence in employees.

-Adapted from "Leader" University of Omaha, [www.unomaha.edu](http://www.unomaha.edu), 1998





# VALUING THE WORKFORCE

As a leader, it is key to encourage the growth of employees, and most importantly to value their opinions and ideas. To continually encourage the solicitation of employee ideas, remember the following 6 tips:

**Schedule regular meetings.** Whether the meetings are weekly or monthly, set aside individual time with each employee. Regardless of the format you choose, set a consistent timeframe that lets employees know the meetings are important to you. Take notes for future reference and follow up on agreed-upon actions.

**Allow for question-and-answer opportunities.** Q & A opportunities can take many forms. By offering multiple formats, you help ensure that all employees have an opportunity to inquire about subjects of importance to them, in a way that suits their comfort zone.

**Invite participation.** Hold meetings that include employees from different groups and try to encourage everyone to speak. If someone is a bit shy or unsure, simply start with a question such as, "John, we'd love your perspective as well. What do you think of what we've talked about so far?" This will provide the group with different perspectives of the issues discussed, and help ensure that a few individuals don't dominate every discussion.

**Create diverse teams.** Create teams across levels and divisions to improve the communication flow and to demonstrate your commitment to effective communication and the infusion of new ideas. This also increases the awareness of the responsibilities and contributions of others in the organization.

**Welcome (and ask for) suggestions.** Get suggestions, opinions, and ideas from employees on a regular basis, either through widespread communication vehicles or by asking them individually. When you follow up, be sure to inform the person who brought up the issue that you addressed it. Don't just let the issue drop, or you'll teach employees that it's not worth participating.

**Keep information flowing.** Use multiple avenues of communication to help ensure you're keeping employees informed. Don't assume that everyone knows what's going on, even in a small group. Also, remember that not everyone processes information the same way, so face-to-face, electronic, print and other formats allow more people to really tune into your message.

-Adapted from Ivy Sea, "Nine Tips for Fostering a Respectful Work Environment," [www.innovis.com](http://www.innovis.com)

## DO YOU listen to employees?

The success of an organization truly depends on creating strong employer-employee relationships. Employees are key to improving operations, overcoming obstacles, and achieving results. This is why it is so important to learn from and listen to all employees. To ensure that you are doing this, ask yourself the following two questions: What did I learn from employees this week? As a manager, do I really listen to employees? If these questions are hard to answer, then you need to challenge yourself to listen better. Every Friday afternoon, write down three things that you learned from employees during the week. Example: An insight about a customer; a better way to handle a process; reasons why a project didn't work. There's so much to learn from employees that if you can't list at least three things a week, you're probably not listening carefully enough.

-Adapted from *Positive Leadership*, (800) 878-5331, [www.ragan.com](http://www.ragan.com)

## THE DEFINITION OF L.E.A.D.E.R.

What does it mean to value the workforce? The answer can be summed up in one simple word: L.E.A.D.E.R.

**L**isten and Learn from others  
**E**nergize the organization  
**A**ct for the benefit of everyone  
**D**evelop yourself and others  
**E**mpower others to lead  
**R**ecognize achievement

-Adapted from *180 Ways To Walk The Leadership Talk* by The Walk The Talk Company

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